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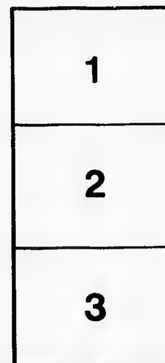

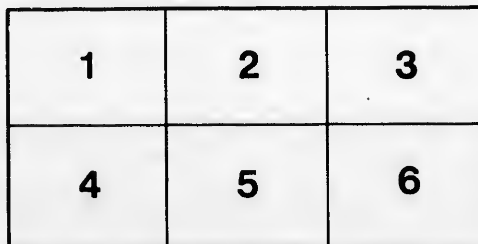

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Dominion Illustrated Monthly- Dec. 1892-

CANADA AND AMERICAN AGGRESSION.

THE United States has always been an aggressive power. Its patriotism has been fed upon strife with Britain, its ambition has been stirred by the idea of one day possessing the whole continent. The inexorable law of its existence seems to have been the absorption of new territory, or at any rate the desire to obtain it. The great Republic coveted Florida and promptly seized it; coveted Louisiana and purchased it! coveted Texas and stole it; and then picked a quarrel with Mexico which ended in the acquisition of California. Had it not been for British power it would have obtained Canada long ago; as it was, the Republic got the fair valley of the Ohio, a great stretch of Canadian territory on the Pacific, and the State of Maine on the Atlantic.

This ambitious desire for the expansion of territory was founded on two principles—a sort of national, inherent earth-hunger, and a jealous hatred of Great Britain. Yet the Mother Country by its defeat of French power upon this continent and its influence in holding the Indians in check, really enabled the Thirteen Colonies to hold their own, after independence had been finally granted them. A great French Canada would have been far more dangerous to their early struggles after autonomy and a united existence, than were the peaceful and conciliatory British Provinces. But this was never thought of by them and from the time when Washington, through the medium of Arnold's invading army, addressed the loyal people of these Colonies down to the present day, the ambition of Sumner seems to have been the aspiration of the American nation; the Stars and Strips floating from the Gulf of Mexico to the North Pole. "We rejoice," said General Washington upon the occasion referred to, "that our enemies have been deceived with regard to you; they have persuaded themselves—they have even dared to say—that the Canadians were not capable of distinguishing between the blessings of liberty and the wretchedness of slavery. By such artifices they hoped to bind you to their views, but they have been deceived. * * * Come then, my brethren, unite with us in an indissoluble union! let us run together to the same goal." And this has been the actuating spirit of their warfare, military, commercial or political, so far as Canada is concerned, from the days of Washington to the regimé of Harrison.

In 1812, the smouldering ashes of hostility originating in the war of the revolution again broke into active flame. Great Britain was still engaged in that life and death struggle with Napoleon in which the liberties of Europe, and it may be, of the world were bound up. The right of search claimed by Britain was more or less necessary to her in the contest going on, but was of course offensive in the last degree to the sensitive American Republic. Occasion was speedily found for action. An attempt to overhaul the U. S. frigate "Chesapeake" resulted in a conflict and its capture by the British ship "Leopard." The act was at once disavowed and reparation offered. But it was useless, and a proclamation was immediately issued excluding from all United States ports His Britannic Majesty's ships, while admitting those of France. England's difficulty had become America's opportunity, and from that time forth, as Sir Archibald Alison, the historian, says: "The object was to wrest from Great Britain the Canadas, and, in conjunction with Napoleon, extinguish its maritime and colonial Empire." Then followed the American destruction of the "Little Bell," sloop of war, under utterly indefensible circumstances, and the subsequent declaration of war on June 18th, 1812. And Sir Isaac Brock, writing six years before this date, describes the Americans as "being employed in drilling and forming their militia and openly declaring their intention of invading the Province the instant that war is determined on." Two years later he states that Jefferson and his party, though anxious to do so, dare not declare war, "and therefore endeavour to attain their objects by every provocation. A few weeks ago the Garrison of Niagara fired upon seven mer-

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chant boats and actually captured them." No reparation appears to have ever been made for this high-handed act.

But war had finally broken out and General Hull invaded Canada from Detroit on the 12th of July, 1812. The result of that invasion may be told in a few words. One month later General Brock was himself crossing the Detroit River, and on the 16th of August articles were drawn up by which the whole Michigan territory, Fort Detroit, a ship of war, thirty-three pieces of cannon, 2,500 troops and a stand of colours were surrendered to about 1,300 British and Colonial troops. It is not necessary to go into any details of a war so well known as that of 1812-14. Suffice it to say that the Canadian militia and volunteers did their duty as nobly as the British soldiers, and

> "Have left their sons a hope, a fame
> They too would rather die than shame."

But the Americans hardly fought fair. In April, 1813, the public buildings of York, now Toronto, were burned, contrary to the articles of capitulation. In the same year Newark was captured, and, in spite of repeated promises by Generals Dearborn and Boyd, the most respectable inhabitants were sent as prisoners into the United States and the whole beautiful village consigned to the flames. General Brown laid waste the country between Chippewa and Fort Erie, burning mills, private houses and the village of St. Davids. Colonel Campbell burnt the village of Dover, near London, whilst frequent raids of Indian and American troops were made in 1813 from Detroit, and whole districts laid waste. It is little use however to follow these events further. Canada held her own at Queenston and Chateauguay, and the war redounded ultimately to our glory and America's discomfiture. In its inception and progress, it was largely a war for the conquest of Canada. Had these British provinces not existed, it seems very probable that the conflict with Great Britain would never have been undertaken. But the American's thought that England was too busy with France to do much and that the Canadians were unable to defend themselves, so that this was their opportunity. Events, however, turned out otherwise, and Washington was captured instead of Montreal.

The treaty of 1818 settled matters for a time, but in 1837 the Canadian rebellion gave an opportunity for renewed aggression. In December of that year Wm. Lyon Mackenzie, at the head of a number of rebels, and with a horde of American sympathisers, took up his quarters at Navy Island, on the Niagara River. Entrenchments were thrown up, artillery and stores obtained from the United States arsenals at several frontier towns and fire was opened on the Canadian shore. Many United States citizens publicly espoused the insurgent cause and lent the rebels every possible assistance. Enlistment went on steadily and without concealment, whilst a "score of American rascaldom," encamped at Grand Island, further up the river, and fired at Canadian farmers as they proceeded with their labours. As Mr. Dent says, in his "Last Thirty Years," there can be no doubt that the State of New York winked at these things and that the sympathies of the American people were almost to a man in favour of the rebels. A cannon was taken from the State artillery to Navy Island on the pretext, given to the American officer in command, that it was wanted to shoot wild ducks. Matters were brought to a crisis by the American branch of the insurgent force obtaining a Buffalo steamboat called the "Caroline," which was used to bring men and supplies to the Island. A number of Americans gave a bond to the owner, indemnifying him in case of capture, and the Collector of Customs at Buffalo knowingly licensed the vessel for the use to which it was to be put. This was too much for loyal men in Upper Canada, and protests having been useless, Colonel McNab, of Hamilton, at last sent an expedition, under Captain Drew, to seize the vessel. The act was promptly performed, the ship set on fire and sent over the Falls. Shortly afterwards the rebels dispersed, though the Alex. McLeod case, growing out of this seizure, almost brought the two nations to the verge of war some years later. As in the recent case of the Italian massacre in New Orleans, the United States Government tried to get out of its responsibility for these infringements of international amity by the ready subterfuge that it could not control a state of the Union in such matters.

But 1842 witnessed a far more disgraceful aggression upon Canadian rights. Deception, not threats, was the weapon employed, and it certainly answered the purpose well. For many years the true location of the boundary line between New Brunswick and the State of Maine

had been a matter of grave dispute. By the Treaty of Paris, in 1783, it had been left uncertain, or, at least, the American Government made that claim, and the friction had been so violent at times upon the border-land between the State and the Province as to almost lead to blows. Finally, in 1842, the situation became strained to such a degree as to render some settlement absolutely essential. The British Government sent out Lord Ashburton, a well-intentioned, but rather weak man, who seems to have been as thoroughly overcome by American expressions of love and friendship as the U. S. Senate was a decade later by Lord Elgin's champagne. Besides this, the physical force, profound air of conviction, and diplomatic astuteness of Daniel Webster, to say nothing of his unscrupulousness, were sufficient to make the result dangerous to the State represented by such a man as Lord Ashburton. And, unfortunately, the country chiefly interested was Canada. By the treaty, as finally settled, seven-twelfths of the territory in dispute was ceded to the United States ; five-twelfths was awarded to Great Britain. And this beautiful piece of diplomacy was so arranged that Mr. Webster and the great Republic kindly accepted about 5,000 square miles less than was claimed by the people of Maine, the relinquished tract being largely a sterile waste. Lord Ashburton thus gave up to American greed a territory nearly equal to the combined areas of Massachusetts and Conneticut—a fertile and well timbered district, which includes the fruitful valley of the Aroostook. And upon what basis was the arrangement made ? This came out later, and stands as greatly to American discredit and disgrace as does recently proposed retaliatory legislation or the laughable Chilian war on paper. While on a visit to Paris during the earlier stages of the discussion, Mr. Jared Sparks, the American historian, discovered an original letter of Benjamin Franklin, written to Count de Vergennes, regarding a map of North America, upon which the Count wished the then newly arranged boundary line of the United States and the British Provinces to be marked. The letter read as follows :

"I have the honour of returning herewith the map your Excellency sent me yesterday. I have marked with a strong red line, according to your desire, the limits of the United States, as settled in the preliminaries between the British and American plenipotentiaries."

After considerable additional research, Mr. Sparks found the map referred to, and promptly sent both documents to Mr. Webster. The red line in the map actually upheld the British contention, and was the one proof required to complete the justice of its position. Yet the U. S. Secretary of State withheld this letter and map until the treaty was signed, giving the Republic a large territory which did not belong to it. Upon the treaty coming up in the Senate, however, and discontent being manifested that still more of Canadian territory had not been obtained, Mr. Webster brought out the map as proof that if it was not satisfactory they would get little or nothing. Senator Benton said he had long been aware of other maps which proved the same view. So the growling ceased, the treaty passed and the United States became the proud owners of a large portion of territory belonging properly to another nation. Besides the happy result to Maine, 4,000,000 acres to the west of Lake Superior was also received by the Republic, as well as several valuable islands in Lake Superior. Thus ended another incident of American aggression.

For a brief period after these events even American hunger seemed to be satisfied. Then came the great Civil war, when the Southern States had to be reconquered, and until its close, with the exception of the Trent affair, the Canadas were allowed to rest and prosper. But in 1865 the Fenian troubles began. Then followed the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty and Canadian Confederation as the only means of escape from the inevitable result of continued American hostility to the disunited and scattered provinces. It is unnecessary to say much of the horde of turbulent spirts known as Fenians, which was let loose upon Canada by the cessation of the Civil war. For over a year there were rumours of contemplated invasion; for many months there were active preparations, drilling, arming and marching ; for weeks the movements of these invading bodies were common talk. Yet nothing was done by the American authorities. Protests presented and evidence given from this side were alike useless. The invasion took place and was repulsed. Many Canadian lives were lost and millions of money spent, but with that spirit of injustice which has characterised all American diplomacy when Canada was concerned, the U. S. Government refused to include the question for compensation on account of this lawless invasion and in-

fraction of international decency in the subsequent Alabama arbitration. Rather than have any trouble England gave us compensation herself in a fair and dignified way, but the United States presented a sorry spectacle. And Great Britain also paid an enormous sum in the Alabama matter. Yet when an impartial tribunal at a later period estimated the value of our fisheries to the United States for a certain term of years during which they had used them, at $5,500,000, it was only after tremendous "kicking" and undignified bickering that the amount was paid.

But more important by far than the Fenian Raids, was the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1866. Both occurrences clearly proved to our people that we had to face the direct hostility of the United States in our attempt to build up a British power on this continent, and unquestionably they forced the question of Confederation to the front and made possible the necessary sacrifices of local interests upon the altar of a common union and a common nationality. There can be no doubt of the reason for that abrogation. It has been declared upon a hundred occasions that the hope of driving us into annexation by a sudden cessation of commercial privileges to which the people had become accustomed was the object and the only definite reason. It was not a matter of trade, because the exports to Canada were greater than the imports from the provinces, and these imports during the war had been absolutely essential to the unproductive millions of the American army. As Hon. George Brown said in the old House of Assembly when delivering his speech upon Confederation just before the treaty was abrogated:

> "Turn in favor of a union of the provinces because it will enable us to meet without alarm the abrogation of the American Reciprocity treaty. * * * Our neighbors in speaking of the treaty keep constantly telling us of Canadian trade. Their whole story is about the buying and selling of commodities in Canada. Not a whisper do you ever hear from them about their buying and selling with the Maritime Provinces; not a word about their enormous carrying trade for all the provinces which they monopolize; not a word of the large sums drawn from us for our vast traffic over their railways and canals; and not a whisper as to their immense profits from fishing in our waters secured to them by the treaty."

No; the simple motive was to punish and coerce Canada. In the words of Mr. Derby, Commissioner of the U.S. Treasury Department, when, a short time afterwards Canada was trying to obtain a renewal of the treaty: "This is the Alternative—Treat with the Provincials or annex the Provinces." The latter was decided upon, but has not yet been accomplished.

Thus we were prepared by the efforts of the United States to destroy our existence as British Colonies for the supreme struggle which was to finally mould the scattered provinces into a united nation. Good did come out of evil in this case, and our country was really "hammered on the anvil of the fates" until formed into the Dominion of Canada; although its British connection undoubtedly saved it from the civil wars and external conflicts to which most young nations are subject in their early days. We have had them, it is true, but not in the same dreadful degree and not with the same danger of conquest and extinction. American aggression has really subserved a useful purpose in our history. It has welded us closely together when danger existed of complete separation and at a time when squabbles and dead-locks threatened to submerge our whole constitutional system, it created Confederation.

But with the union of our Provinces, the growth of our commerce, the development of a great railway and steamship system, the elaboration of our fiscal regulations and protection of our national interests, American dislike changed into jealousy, and the ambition to annex "the Provinces" has in latter days assumed the form of a desire to at least get possession of our fisheries and cripple our railways. For a time after Confederation, the Treaty of Washington seemed to settle the outstanding claims and disputes. By its terms, the reference of the San Juan question to arbitration, settled, as usual, against Canada, a most knotty point, which had been, since 1846, a cause of trouble, dissension and constant controversy. The Halifax Commission, as already mentioned, valued our fisheries, and, after a time, payment was made.

Coming down a decade or so to 1883, we find the necessary two years notice given to our Government of the intention of the United States to abrogate the fishery clauses of the Washington Treaty, by which our fish were admitted free in exchange for fishing privileges on our coasts. A number of smaller attempts to coerce or coax Canada into closer relations at the expense of the Empire followed. The West Indies were asked in 1888 to accept a treaty discriminating

against Canada and the Mother Country, but it was very properly vetoed. The year previous informal negotiations had been entered into for the annexation of the islands to the United States, but they had to be abandoned. About the same time commenced the Commercial Union movement engineered in Canada with a similar object in view. Senator Sherman announced that in ten years the Dominion would be annexed to the Republic, and Messrs. Butterworth, Hitt, Wiman, Goldwin Smith and others took up the propaganda. In 1885 the Riel rebellion occurred. Great sympathy was expressed for the leader and the rebels generally in the United States and as in the previous time of trouble during the Fort Garry rebellion of 1871, our troops were refused permission to travel on American railroads.

But the great and officially indefensible act of this period was the abrogation after due notice of that portion of the Washington Treaty which effected the fishing relations of the two countries. No particular reason was assigned, but when the Dominion Government properly concluded that abrogation on one side meant the same thing on the other and promptly proceeded to fall back upon the treaty of 1818, which still held good, for the protection of our fisheries against poachers and poaching, great was the outcry. A temporary modus vivendi was granted the Americans, and after much war-like talk, the Eagle concluded that something must be done and a treaty was negotiated but promptly repudiated by the Senate. Then President Cleveland rose in his wrath and as he could not touch the Senate decided to hit at Canada and issued the famous Retaliation message of 1888. Its utter injustice was manifested by the President's own statement that :

> "I fully believe the treaty just rejected by the Senate was well suited to the exigency, and that its provisions were adequate for our security in the future from vexatious incidents and for the promotion of friendly neighbourhood and intimacy without sacrificing in the least our national pride or dignity."

Nothing much was done, it is true, but the willingness was apparent. As Mr. James G. Blaine said about this time, "Is it the design of the President to make the fishing question odious by embarrassing commercial relations along 3,000 miles of frontier and to inflict upon American communities a needless, a vexatious and a perilous condition of trade ?"

To strike, or talk of striking, at our bonding trade has, indeed, long been a favourite subject with the Americans, and perhaps the only thing that prevents it is the injury which would be done them as well as ourselves. Perhaps it might be even greater in their case. But President Cleveland was defeated on seeking re-election, and in 1888 Mr. Harrison came into office.

Wm. McKinley, Jr., then tried his hand at improving the American tariff. Canada was not forgotten. Indeed she occupied quite a prominent place in the new bill. The interests of the farmer must be protected from Canadian competition, so a duty was placed upon eggs, the production of which certainly could not be materially affected thereby, and upon barley. The latter product was one which could only have been taxed from a principle of actual hostility. Canadian barley is infinitely superior to American, and is a necessity to the brewers, who, indeed, complained bitterly about the increased duty. But it was useless. The administration at Washington had been apparently informed, no doubt, by Mr. Erastus Wiman and others that now was the time to turn the screw, and upon this occasion at least it would be successful. The Canadian farmer was in a position of temporary dissatisfaction, and a little further restriction upon his exports to the States would assuredly make him vote for a policy which all American politicians believed to mean annexation. Mr. Wiman's statement that "a prolonged dose of McKinleyism will bring Canada into commercial union" was generally believed, and duties were consequently increased or newly imposed upon a large number of Canadian products. Incidentally of course, the new tariff was also made to bear heavily against Great Britain. But in the Dominion, the only result apparent was an increase in our trade in 1890 and 1892 of something like $25,000,000, and a profound conviction, growing daily deeper, that we can get on perfectly well without the United States along the whole line of commerce and politics.

It is not necessary to do more than refer briefly to the latest development of American aggressive resentment. In acquiring Alaska, the Republic now asserts that it obtained rights from Russia in the open waters of Behring Sea which it had successfully protested against Russia using when that power possessed Alaska. And, while claiming that Great

Britain had no right on the Atlantic coast to restrict foreign vessels from fishing within the three mile limit, the United States claimed the right to control the waters upon the Pacific coast off its own territories for hundreds of miles. Our fishing craft and sealers, which latter were and are still termed "poachers" throughout the American press, were rudely seized and their property taken from them. For two years this trouble has been progressing, and if Lord Salisbury had not put his foot down with determination and demanded a settlement by arbitration, we should be on the verge of war once again, as indeed it seems was the case at one period of the present negotiations. It is doubtful if the treaty, when concluded, would have been accepted by the Senate if the British Premier had not plainly said that otherwise the modus vivendi would not be renewed and Canadian rights would be amply protected. This hint was sufficient, coupled with the announcement that "a section of the navy is moving northward," or the *Morning Post's* statement that "England cannot neglect the interests of Canada."

The American press in general, in particular the N. Y. *Sun* and N. Y. *Recorder*, with all their amusing remarks made before Lord Salisbury finally spoke in a way which reminds one of the hand of iron 'neath the glove of velvet, could not conceal the injustice of American claims without the silliest braggadocio. Said the latter sheet:

> No wonder the patience of our Government is exhausted But the Government has spoken, and its voice to-day is like the shot at Lexington, heard all all around the world. Away back in the Madison Administration there may be found an historical parallel in many ways to the present situation.

Many similar comments were made.

And now to sum up the conclusions of this article;

1. From Washington down to Harrison, American policy has been ruled by hostility to England.

2. This hostility has been vented upon Canada, until jealousy of our progress and fear of the establishment of a great separate power on this continent, transformed the vicarious enmity into one with a direct application.

3. Annexation would solve these fears for the future and give the United States our markets, government, railways and fisheries. Hence their present policy.

4. Ample proof of these assertions will be found in the Revolutionary war; the struggle of 1812; the rebellions of 1837 and 1885; the Fenian raids; the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854-66; the refusal to renew it in any way honourable and fair to Canada; the Ashburton Treaty: the San Juan troubles; the partial abrogation of the Washington Treaty; the Atlantic fisheries; the McKinley Bill; the Behring Sea seizures; and the steady utterances of the statesmen and press of the American Republic.

Canada wants only to be on good terms with its great neighbor, feels only the highest sentiment of friendship for it and admiration for the patriotism so often shown in its history, but we have been treated with such consistent bitterness and marked evidences of a desire for our national absorption, that Canadians have, I think, finally determined to look elsewhere for better relations and to no more trouble the great republic with requests for reciprocal friendship. We look to Great Britain now and to closer British union, and, to the few annexationists within our territory and the plotters without, can respond in the noble words put by Charles Mair into the mouth of Sir Isaac Brock:

> "Ye men of Canada, subjects with me of that Imperial power,
> Whose liberties are marching round the earth.
> Our death may build into our country's life,
> And failing this 'twere better still to die
> Than live the breathing spoils of infamy."

J. CASTELL HOPKINS.

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